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16 AUG 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director for Operations

FROM : Frederick P. Hitz  
Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT : House Permanent Select Committee on  
Intelligence Interest in Receiving  
a Briefing on CIA's Liaison Relationships

1. (C) On 14 August 1978 [ ] of my staff, had meetings with Mike O'Neil, Chief Counsel, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Loch Johnson, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Oversight. The subject discussed in these two individual conversations was the Agency's failure to date to brief the Committee on the Agency's liaison relationships and arrangements. While Mr. O'Neil was hard-nosed and altogether unrelenting in his insistence that the Agency spell out in detail all of the details of all of its relationships with all liaison services, Mr. Johnson recognized that the Committee really does not need all that information in order to adequately perform its oversight mission. Mr. Johnson volunteered to talk to Mr. Thomas Latimer, Staff Director, and to Mike O'Neil and was confident that he could persuade them to make their request for a briefing on liaisons infinitely less specific. Details of the conversations follow.

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2. (C) Mike O'Neil said that the Agency has been ducking the Committee's 11 November 1977 request for a detailed briefing on the Agency's liaison relationships and placed this recalcitrance up against the Agency's request for Committee support on the Civil Service Bill and others. Mr. O'Neil refused to accept the validity of the argument that liaison relationships are both a source and a method. He did not accept the contention that the Committee does not need to know the name and precise relationships we have with each and every liaison service. His position was that the Committee is not in a position to tell the rest of Congress that we are doing our job properly unless they have this kind of information. He did not accept the counter argument that the Committee does not know the names or identities of our foreign agents and that it would be inconsistent to give names and specific details of our relation-

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ships with individual liaison services. Mr. O'Neil concluded the conversation with the mild threat that this lack of cooperativeness on the part of the Agency would and should be reflected in the annual Committee report (which under H. Res. 658 is due on or around the first of the year). It should be added that all of the above conversation was conducted in a very friendly and amicable tone.

3. (C) In a subsequent conversation with Loch Johnson all of the foregoing was reviewed and Mr. Johnson indicated that his concern with regard to liaison relationships is that the Committee needs to be assured that the Agency is not doing things through its liaison relationships that it would otherwise not be entitled to do. For example, he said that the Committee must assure itself that the Agency is not transferring massive quantities of technical assistance to any foreign liaison service which that service in turn could or would use to monitor or stifle internal dissent. It was suggested to Mr. Johnson that the Agency could provide a briefing on liaison services without citing any name of any service. This briefing would include: the benefits derived from our liaison relationships; the cost in both manpower and dollars to the Agency; the dollar commitment in support of liaison relationships; and specific assurances that the Agency is not engaging in certain specified activities of particular concern to the Committee. It was also suggested to Mr. Johnson that once the Committee had these assurances that the Agency would be honor bound to live with and abide by them and would be open to criticism and/or sanction from the Congress were we to do otherwise. Mr. Johnson stated that he believed this sort of formula would be accepted by the Committee and went on to state that, as one of the original requestors for the briefing on liaison, he was confident that he could persuade both Messrs. Latimer and O'Neil that any briefing on liaison relationships could be so restricted.

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FREDERICK P. HITZ

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